Tafsir Ibn Kathir

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Al-Layl

Revealed in Makkah

The Recitation of Surat Al-Layl in the `Isha' Prayer

The statement of the Prophet to Mu`adh has already preceded, where he said, Why did you not pray with (the recitation of)

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الاٌّعْلَى

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَـهَا

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى

(Glorify the Name of your Lord the Most High) (Surah 87),

(By the sun and Duhaha) (Surah 91), and

(By the night as it envelops) (Surah 92)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَـنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى

92:1 By the night as it envelops.

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى

92:2 By the day as it appears.

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالأٌنثَى

92:31By Him Who created male and female.

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى

92:4 Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

92:5 As for him who gives and has Taqwa,

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى

92:6 And believes in Al-Husna.

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

92:7 We will make smooth for him the path of ease.

أَمَّا مَن بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىوَ

92:8 But he who is greedy and thinks himself self-sufficient,

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى

92:9 and denies Al-Husna.

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى

92:10 We will make smooth for him the path to evil.

هُ إِذَا تَرَدَّىوَمَا يُغْنِى عَنْهُ مَالُ

92:11 And what will his wealth avail him when he goes down (in destruction).

Swearing by the Diversity of Mankind in Their Efforts and informing of the Different Results of that

Allah swears by saying:

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى (١)

By the night as it envelops.

meaning, when it covers the creation with its darkness.

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّى (٢)

By the day as it appears.

meaning, with its light and its radiance.

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى (٣)

By Him Who created male and female.

This is similar to Allah's saying,

وَخَلَقْنَـكُمْ أَزْوَجاً

And We have created you in pairs. (78:8)

It is also similar to saying,

وَمِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ

And of everything We have created pairs. (51:49)

And just as these things that are being sworn by are opposites, likewise that which this swearing is about are opposing things.

This is why Allah says,

إِنَّ سَعْيَكُمْ لَشَتَّى (٤)

Certainly, your efforts and deeds are diverse.

meaning, the actions of the servants that they have performed are also opposites and diverse. Therefore, there are those who do good and there are those who do evil.

Allah then says,

فَأَمَّا مَن أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى (٥)

As for him who gives and has **Taqwa**.

meaning, he gives what he has been commanded to give and he fears Allah in his affairs.

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى (٦)

And believes in **Al-Husna**.

meaning, in the compensation for that. This was said by Qatadah.

Khusayf said, "In the reward.''

Then Allah says,

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى (٧)

We will make smooth for him the path of ease.

Ibn `Abbas said, "Meaning for goodness.''

Thus, Allah says,

وَأَمَّا مَن بَخِلَ ...

But he who is greedy,

meaning, with that which he has.

... وَاسْتَغْنَى (٨)

and thinks himself self-sufficient,

Ikrimah reported that Ibn Abbas said,

"This means he is stingy with his wealth and considers himself to be in no need of his Lord, the Mighty and Majestic.''

This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim.

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى (٩)

And denies **Al-Husna**.

meaning, the recompense in the abode of the Hereafter.

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى (١٠)

We will make smooth for him the path to evil.

meaning, the path of evil.

This is as Allah says,

وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَـرَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُواْ بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِى طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

> And We shall turn their hearts and their eyes away, as they refused to believe therein for the first time, and We shall leave them in their trespass to wander blindly. (6:110)

And there are many Ayat with this meaning, proving that Allah rewards those who intend good with success, while whoever intends evil is abandoned, and all of this is in accordance with a preordained decree.

There are also many Hadiths that prove this.

The Narration of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq

Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Bakr that he said to the Messenger of Allah ,

> "O Messenger of Allah! Do we act according to what has already been decided, or is the matter just beginning (i.e., still undecided)''
>
> He replied,
>
> بَلْ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ فُرِغَ مِنْه
>
> Indeed it is according to what has already been decided.
>
> Then Abu Bakr said, "Then what (good) are deeds, O Messenger of Allah''
>
> He replied,
>
> كُلٌّ مُيَسَّرٌ لِمَا خُلِقَ لَه
>
> Everyone will find it easy to do such deeds that will lead him to what he was created for.

The Narration of `Ali

Al-Bukhari recorded from Ali bin Abi Talib that they (the Companions) were with the Messenger of Allah at the cemetery of Baqi` Al-Gharqad for a funeral, when the Prophet said,

مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا وَقَدْ كُتِبَ مَقْعَدُهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَمَقْعَدُهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

> There is none among you except that his place has already been written, a seat in Paradise and a seat in the Hellfire.

They said, "O Messenger of Allah! Should we depend on this''

He replied,

اعْمَلُوا ، فَكُلٌّ مُيَسَّرٌ لِمَا خُلِقَ لَه

> Perform deeds, for everyone will have the deeds of what he was created for (Paradise or Hell) made easy for him.
>
> Then he recited the Ayah,
>
> فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى
>
> وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى
>
> فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى
>
> As for him who gives and has **Taqwa**, and believes in **Al-Husna**. We will make smooth for him the path of ease.''
>
> until the Ayah: لِلْعُسْرَى (the path to evil).

He (Imam Al-Bukhari) also recorded another similar narration from Ali bin Abi Talib in which he said,

> "We were at a funeral in the cemetery of Baqi` Al-Gharqad when the Messenger of Allah came and sat down. So we came and sat around him and he had a stick with him. Then he bowed his head and he began to scratch the ground with his stick. He then said,
>
> مَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ مَا مِنْ نَفْسٍ مَنْفُوسَةٍ إِلَّا كُتِبَ مَكَانُهَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ،وَإِلَّا قَدْ كُتِبَتْ شَقِيَّةً أَوْ سَعِيدَةً
>
> There is not anyone among you -- or is not a single soul (that has been created) -- except that his place has been written in Paradise or in the Fire, and it has been written that he will be miserable or happy.

A man said,

"O Messenger of Allah! Should we just depend on what has been written for us and give up performing deeds For whoever of us is of the people of happiness then he will be of the people of happiness, and whoever among us is of the people of misery then he will be of the people of misery.''

The Prophet replied,

أمَّا أهْلُ السَّعَادَةِ فَيُيَسَّرُونَ لِعَمَلِ أهْلِ السَّعَادَةِ، وَأمَّا أهْلُ الشَّقَاءِ فَيُيَسَّرُونَ إلَى عَمَلِ أهْلِ الشَّقَاءِ، ثُمَّ قَرَأَ:

Those people who are the people of happiness, they will have the deeds of the people of happiness made easy for them. And those people who are the people of misery, they will have the deeds of the people of misery made easy for them. Then he recited the Ayah:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

وَأَمَّا مَن بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَى

وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَى

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَى

As for him who gives and has **Taqwa**, and believes in **Al-Husna**. We will make smooth for him the path of ease (goodness).

But he who is greedy and thinks himself self-sufficient, and belies **Al-Husna**. We will make smooth for him the path to evil.

The other compilers of the Group have also recorded this Hadith.

The Narration of `Abdullah bin `Umar

Imam Ahmad recorded from Ibn Umar that Umar said,

"O Messenger of Allah! Do you think that the deeds that we do are a matter that is already

predetermined or are they something just beginning or new''

The Prophet replied,

فِيمَا قَدْ فُرِغَ مِنْهُ، فَاعْمَلْ يَا ابْنَ الْخَطَّابِ، فَإِنَّ كُلًّا مُيَسَّرٌ، أَمَّا مَنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ السَّعَادَةِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْمَلُ لِلسَّعَادَةِ، وَأَمَّا مَنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّقَاءِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْمَلُ لِلشَّقَاءِ

It is something that has already been predetermined. Therefore, work deeds, O son of Al-Khattab! For verily, each person will have things made easy for him. So whoever is from the people of happiness, then he will work deeds for happiness, and whoever is from the people of misery, then he will work deeds for misery.''

This Hadith has been recorded by At-Tirmidhi in the Book of Al-Qadar and he said "**Hasan Sahih**.''

Another Hadith Narrated by Jabir Ibn Jarir recorded from Jabir bin Abdullah that he said,

"O Messenger of Allah! Are we performing deeds for something that has already been predetermined or is the matter based upon what we are just doing (now)''

The Prophet replied,

لِأَمْرٍ قَدْ فُرِغَ مِنْه

It is a matter that has been predetermined.

Then Suraqah said, "Then what is the purpose of deeds''

The Messenger of Allah then said,

كُلُّ عَامِلٍ مُيَسَّرٌ لِعَمَلِه

Everyone who does deeds will have his deeds made easy for him.

Muslim also recorded this Hadith.

Ibn Jarir recorded from Amir bin Abdullah bin Az-Zubayr that he said,

"Abu Bakr used to free servants upon their acceptance of Islam in Makkah. He used to free the elderly and the women when they accepted Islam. So his father said to him,

`O my son! I see that you are freeing people who are weak. But if you freed strong men they could stand with you, defend you and protect you.'

Abu Bakr replied,

`O my father! I only want -- and I think he said -- what is with Allah.'

Some people of my family have told me this Ayah was revealed about him:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى

وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَى

فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَى

As for him who gives and has **Taqwa**, and believes in **Al-Husna**. We will make smooth for him the path of ease.''

Then Allah says,

وَمَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُ مَالُهُ إِذَا تَرَدَّى (١١)

And what will his wealth avail him when he goes down?

Mujahid said, "This means when he dies.''

Abu Salih and Malik said -- narrating from Zayd bin Aslam,

"When he goes down into the Fire.''

Al-Layl

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى

92:12 Truly, on Us is (to give) guidance.

وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى

92:13 And truly, unto Us (belong) the last (Hereafter) and the first (this world).

فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَاراً تَلَظَّى

92:14 Therefore I have warned you of a Fire Talazza.

لاَ يَصْلَـهَآ إِلاَّ الأَشْقَى

92:15 None shall enter it save the most wretched.

الَّذِى كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى

92:16 Who denies and turns away.

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الأَتْقَى

92:17 And those with Taqwa will be far removed from it.

الَّذِى يُؤْتِى مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى

92:18 He who gives of his wealth for self-purification.

وَمَا لأَحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى

92:19 And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.

إِلاَّ ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الأَعْلَى

92:20 Except to seek the Face of his Lord, the Most High.

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى

92:21 He, surely, will be pleased.

The Matter of Guidance and other than it is in the Hand of Allah, and Allah's Warning about the Hellfire

Allah's says,

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا لَلْهُدَى (١٢)

Truly, on Us is (to give) guidance.

Qatadah said,

"This means, We will explain what is lawful and what is prohibited.''

Others have said that it means,

"Whoever traverses upon the path of guidance, then he will reach Allah (i.e., in the Hereafter).''

They consider this Ayah like Allah's saying,

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ

And upon Allah is the responsibility to explain the Straight path. (16:9)

This has been mentioned by Ibn Jarir.

Allah said;

وَإِنَّ لَنَا لَلْآخِرَةَ وَالْأُولَى (١٣)

And truly, unto Us (belong) the last (Hereafter) and the first (this world).

This means, `they both belong to Us and I (Allah) am in complete control of them.'

Then Allah says,

فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّى (١٤)

Therefore I have warned you of a Fire **Talazza**.

Mujahid said, "Blazing.''

Imam Ahmad recorded from Simak bin Harb that he heard An-Nu`man bin Bashir giving a sermon, in which he said,

"I heard the Messenger of Allah giving a sermon, in which he said:

أَنْذَرْتُكُمُ النَّار

I have warned you of the Fire.

And he said it in such a voice that if a man was in the marketplace he could hear it from where I am standing now.

And he said it (with such force) that the garment that was on his shoulder fell down to his feet.''

Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Ishaq that he heard An-Nu`man bin Bashir giving a sermon, in which he said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah saying,

إِنَّ أَهْوَنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ عَذَابًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ رَجُلٌ تُوضَعُ فِي أَخْمَصِ قَدَمَيْهِ جَمْرَتَانِ يَغْلِي مِنْهُمَا دِمَاغُه

Verily, the person to be punished lightest of the people of the Fire on the Day of Judgement will be a man who will have placed on the soles of his feet two coals that will cause his brain to boil.''

Imam Al-Bukhari also recorded this narration.

Muslim recorded that Abu Ishaq narrated from An-Nu`man bin Bashir that the Messenger of Allah said,

إِنَّ أَهْوَنَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ عَذَابًا مَنْ لَهُ نَعْلَانِ وَشِرَاكَانِ مِنْ نَارٍ يَغْلِي مِنْهُمَا دِمَاغُهُ كَمَا يَغْلِي الْمِرْجَلُ، مَا يَرَى أَنَّ أَحَدًا أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ عَذَابًا، وَإِنَّهُ لَأَهْوَنُهُمْ عَذَابًا

Verily, the lightest punishment received by the people of the Hellfire will be a man who will have two sandals whose straps will be made of fire that will cause his brain to boil just as a cauldron boils. Yet he will not think that anyone is receiving a torment more severe than him, even though he will be receiving the lightest punishment of them.

Allah says,

لَا يَصْلَاهَا إِلَّا الْأَشْقَى (١٥)

None shall enter it save the most wretched.

meaning, none will enter surrounded by it on all sides except the most wretched.

Then Allah explains who this (the most wretched) is by His saying,

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ ...

Who denies, meaning, in his heart.

....وَتَوَلَّى (١٦)

and turns away.

meaning, from acting with his limbs and performing deeds according to their pillars.

Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said,

كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّـةَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبَى

All of my followers will enter Paradise on the Day of Judgement except for whoever refuses.

They (the Companions) said, "Who would refuse, O Messenger of Allah''

He replied,

مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى

Whoever obeys me, he will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me, then he has refused.

Al-Bukhari also recorded this Hadith.

Allah then says,

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الْأَتْقَى (١٧)

And those with **Taqwa** will be far removed from it.

meaning, the righteous, pure, most pious person will be saved from the Fire.

Then He explains who he is by His saying,

الَّذِي يُؤْتِي مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى (١٨)

He who gives of his wealth for self-purification.

meaning, he spends his wealth in obedience of his Lord in order to purify himself, his wealth and whatever Allah has bestowed upon him of religion and worldly things.

وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى (١٩)

And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.

meaning, giving his wealth is not done so that he may gain some favor from someone wherein they return some good to him, and therefore he gives to get something in return.

He only spends his wealth

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاء وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى (٢٠)

to seek the Face of his Lord, the Most High.

meaning, hoping to attain the blessing of seeing Him in the final abode in the Gardens of Paradise.

Allah then says,

وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى (٢١)

He, surely, will be pleased.

meaning, indeed those with these characteristics will be pleased.

The Cause of this Revelation and the Virtue of Abu Bakr

Many of the scholars of Tafsir have mentioned that these Ayat were revealed about **Abu Bakr As-Siddiq**. Some of them even mentioned that there is a consensus among the Qur'anic commentators concerning this. There is no doubt that he is included in the meaning of these Ayat, and that he is the most deserving of the Ummah to be described with these characteristics in general, for indeed, the wording of these Ayat is general. As in Allah's saying,

وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا الأَتْقَى
الَّذِى يُؤْتِى مَالَهُ يَتَزَكَّى
وَمَا لأَّحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى

> And those with **Taqwa** will be far removed from it. He who gives of his wealth for self-purification. And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back.

However, he (Abu Bakr) was the first and foremost of this Ummah to have all of these characteristics and other praiseworthy characteristics as well. For verily, he was truthful, pious, generous, charitable, and he always spent his wealth in obedience of His Master (Allah) and in aiding the Messenger of Allah . How many Dirhams and Dinars did he spend seeking the Face of His Most Noble Lord. And did not consider any of the people as owning him some favor that he needed to get compensation for. Rather, his virtue and kindness was even shown towards leaders and chiefs from all the other tribes as well. This is why `Urwah bin Mas`ud, who was the chief of the Thaqif tribe, said to him on the day of the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah,

"By Allah, if I did not owe you a debt, which I have not paid you back for, I would have responded to you (i.e., your call to Islam).''

Abu Bakr As-Siddiq became angry with him for saying such a thing (i.e., I owe you something). So if this was his position with the chiefs of the Arabs and the heads of the tribes, then what about those other than them. Thus, Allah says,

وَمَا لأَّحَدٍ عِندَهُ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَى
إِلاَّ ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الأَعْلَى
وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَى

> And who has (in mind) no favor from anyone to be paid back. Except to seek the Face of his Lord, the Most High. He, surely, will be pleased.

And in the Two Sahihs it is recorded that the Messenger of Allah said,

مَنْ أَنْفَقَ زَوْجَيْنِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ دَعَتْهُ خَزَنَةُ الْجَنَّةِ يَاعَبْدَاللهِ، هَذَا خَيْر

Whoever equipped two riding animals in the way of Allah, the Gatekeepers of Paradise will call to him saying,

"O servant of Allah! This is good.''

So Abu Bakr said,

"O Messenger of Allah! The one who is called from them will not have any need. Will there be anyone who will be called from all of them''

The Prophet replied,

نَعَمْ ، وَأَرْجُو أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنْهُم

Yes, and I hope that you will be one of them.

This is the end of the Tafsir of Surah **Al-Layl**, and all praise and thanks are due to Allah.